(b) if so, the number thereof and the steps taken by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) for redressal of the same?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Complaints are received from time to time regarding bad condition of some roads under National Highways Development Project (NHDP). Large number of complaints relate to bad condition of roads due to damage during heavy rains and poor maintenance owing to non-performance of contractors.

Steps taken by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to address this situation include carrying out urgent repair work, re-surfacing, termination of contract of non-performing contractors and re-awarding the work, etc. Provisions have been made in the operation and maintenance contracts to ensure that road is made traffic worthy and serviceable. Flood damage repair is also undertaken as and when required.

Biological diversity

*447. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the various measures to popularise the concept of Biological diversity.

(b) the various kinds of institutions concerned over Research and Development of Bio-diversity and the role of the National Bio-diversity Authority; and

(c) whether the conservation aspect of Bio-diversity would offend or put a hurdle on the growth and development of medicinal plants, herbal plants used for health care?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The Government has taken a number of measures to popularise the concept of conservation of biological diversity which include introduction of curricula in the educational institutions and generation of awareness through a scheme on 'Environmental Education, Awareness and Training'. The components under this scheme are National Green Corps Programme, National Environment Awareness Campaign, organizing of seminars, workshops and training courses, generating awareness through mass media and providing grants-in-aid to professional bodies to achieve this objective. Institutions under the Central Government such as the various forest institutes, the Botanical and Zoological Surveys of India promote knowledge about the different flora and fauna of India which make up bio-diversity. Besides, the State Governments, institutions in the private sector and Non-Governmental Organizations have also been undertaking activities for popularising the various aspects of conservation of bio-diversity.

(b) Institutions under the Central Government such as the Botanical Survey of India, the Zoological Survey of India, the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, the G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Nature and the Wildlife Institute of India, institutions under the State Governments and the private sector, through in-house and sponsored projects are carrying out research on multi disciplinary aspects of bio-diversity conservation. The National Bio-diversity Authority has been established under the Biological Diversity Act 2002 with the aim to lay down procedures and guidelines to conserve bio-diversity, promote sustainable use, and ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources and associated knowledge, to advise the Central Government on matters related to bio-diversity, create awareness among the masses and coordinate the activities of the State Bio-diversity Boards.

(c) No, Sir, In fact, the guidelines and regulations on conservation of bio-diversity will ensure sustainable development and supply of medicinal plants for health care of the people, the majority of whom have been following traditional methods of health care.

Steps to reduce urban poverty

*450. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of below poverty line (BPL) people living in the urban areas of the country at present, State-wise;

(b) the percentage of BPL people in the total population of urban areas, State-wise;

(c) the reasons for continuous poverty of large number of people despite the schemes of the Union Government to improve their lives; and

(d) the concrete steps proposed to be taken by the Union Government to reduce the increasing urban poverty in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) Planning Commission release estimates of urban poor from time to time based on the national sample surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) has conducted the latest large sample survey on household consumer expenditure (61st Round), covering the period July 2004 to June 2005. From this data, two different consumption distributions for the year 2004-05 have been obtained. The first one is from the consumption data collected using 30-day recall period for all the items. The other distribution is obtained from the consumer expenditure data collected using 365-day recall period for five infrequently purchased non-food items, namely clothing, footwear, durable goods, educations and institutional medical expenses and 30-day recall period for the remaining items. These two consumption distribution have been termed as Uniform Recall Period (URP) consumption distribution and Mixed Recall Period (MRP) consumption distribution respectively. The Planning Commission has estimated poverty in 2004-05 using both the distributions. As per these estimates, number and percentage of urban poor both by MRP method as well as URP method, State-wise, are at the Statement(*See* below).

(c) The reasons for continuous poverty in large number of cities and towns include various factors such as natural increase in the urban poor population, migration of poor people from rural areas to urban areas, lack of basic amenities including affordable housing to low income segments, inadequate employment opportunities generated by the organized sector etc. Moreover, budgetary allocations under various governmental schemes, till the launching of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) in December, 2005, have been meagre.

(d) The Government of India has adopted a two pronged approach to address the issue of increasing urban poverty in the country:

(i) A large component of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) namely Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP), applicable to 63 identified cities and Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP), applicable to other cities and towns, provide additional central assistance